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Histoire de France depuis les Origines jusqu'à la Révolution, publiée sous la direction de M. ERNEST LAVISSE. Tome VIII., Partie II. *Le Règne de Louis XV. (1715-1774)*. Par H. CARRÉ, Professeur à l'Université de Poitiers. (Paris: Hachette et Cie. 1909. Pp. 428.)

ALTHOUGH this volume brings the history of France to within fifteen years of the Revolution, it cannot be relied upon for a general description of the "old régime". What is said about social conditions is introduced incidentally in accounts of the controversies over the *vingtièmes* or in explanation of the results of the propaganda of the economists and the physiocrats. Part of the reason for the lack of such descriptions is found in the fact that the preceding volume contained nearly a hundred pages on the subject, and M. Carré has apparently considered it enough if he notes the changes in the situation, especially those which came in the second half of the century. The main interests which the volume serves, however, are of the same order. Diplomacy and war occupy less than a quarter of its pages. The matters treated with fullness are questions of administration and finance, and the intellectual progress of the country, illustrated particularly in the work of Voltaire, Montesquieu, the Encyclopedists, and the economists.

If it be asked, is there any single impression left by the reading of this volume which suggests the secret of the fatal inability of the French government to apply in time a remedy to its menacing ills, the answer may be the blight which the presence on the throne of such a man as Louis XV. seemed to cast upon the abilities of really able administrators. France was not perishing for the lack of either wisdom or warnings. The ominous want was a king, who, if not great himself, would furnish the necessary element of unity and continuity. Moreover, it was futile to expect disinterested devotion to become a common trait among the ministers of such a monarch. Even the Abbé Terray proposed to reform the conditions of the contract of the "farm" by abolishing the *croupes*, but he discovered that Louis XV. figured in person for a quarter of the venture of one "farmer", and Mme. du Barry for 20,000 livres in that of another. There was a demand that Terray suppress the *acquits de comptant*, and M. Carré thinks this reform might have made possible the establishment of an equilibrium between receipts and expenditures, but the change was out of the question, because in that case the king could no longer dip into the treasury at discretion and would have been obliged to justify his expenditures. This was the time when Mme. du Barry, "jeune, fraîche, amusante à son perpétuel ennui, ni tracassière, ni ambitieuse", was receiving 300,000 livres a month.

It was the king who was responsible for the failure of the projects to distribute more fairly the burdens of taxation, and so, eventually, to increase the revenue. Machault attempted in 1750 to collect the *vingtièmes* from the clergy, but when he was making some progress in

the difficult enterprise, Louis was seized with a crisis of pious emotion. "Le bruit courut que Mme. de Pompadour allait être disgraciée. Il n'en fut rien; mais le Roi renonça à soumettre le Clergé à l'impôt." When it was not the mistresses, it was the royal nonchalance, the ennui, the feebleness of will, which made firmness and continuity of policy impossible. The king did not lack perspicacity, and he saw the danger in the extravagant claims of the parlements. On one occasion he said, "Ils finiront par perdre l'État", and when someone interrupted him with the remark that the judges were merely "petits robins", Louis replied, "Vous ne savez pas ce qu' ils font et ce qu' ils pensent; c'est une assemblée de républicains. En voilà, au reste, assez: les choses, comme elles sont, dureront autant que moi."

Next in interest is M. Carré's treatment of that phase of the intellectual history of the reign which bore directly upon the prospects of reform. He traces with unusual clearness the influence of England upon Voltaire, Montesquieu, and others in the earlier years of the movement. He mentions the efforts of refugees in England and Holland, through the publication of the translations of British works. In France the abbé prévost published, from 1733 to 1740, a sort of encyclopedic review, *Le Pour et Contre*, in which he presented translations of English philosophical works and even the novels of Richardson.

M. Carré's treatment of financial and economic questions is especially clear. His account of the "system" of John Law is the most complete and exact description, within anything like the same compass, of this strange venture in high finance. Another equally satisfying explanation of an interesting movement concerns the influence upon the administration of the ideas of *laissez faire* touching industrial methods. There are intimations that the success of the principle was not unqualified. In regard to the rural population M. Carré thinks that while the conditions in the later years of Fleury's administration were wretched, there was a distinct improvement in the third quarter of the century. He quotes some apparently decisive evidence from the work of the economist Moheau, entitled *Recherches et Considérations sur la Population de la France*, which appeared in 1774.

M. Carré seems unusually successful in his portraits of the principal personages of the time. Upon them all, beginning with Dubois and ending with Terray, he has furnished the sort of information which substitutes men for the vague impersonations of abstract qualities, frequently of vices, which have worn certain of these names.

HENRY E. BOURNE.

Henry Stuart, Cardinal of York, and his Times. By ALICE SHIELD, with an introduction by ANDREW LANG. (London and New York: Longmans, Green, and Company. 1908. Pp. xvi, 353.)

THERE may be some readers, "ravish'd with the whistling of a name", whose interest in the last inglorious years of the banished